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ABSTRACT

A definition of leader authentication was developed, focusing on a leader's salience of self over role, non-manipulation of subordinates and accepting of personal and organizational responsibility. The Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS) was constructed to be consistent with this definition. Its validity was checked by specifying and testing hypotheses within the concepts theoretically related to authenticity: esprit, thrust, and status concern. Data were collected using teachers and principals in 42 New Jersey elementary schools with a revised 32-item scale. The LAS was found highly reliable and yielded predicted correlations between authenticity and othe Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire subtests for thrust, esprit and status concern. (Author/CM)

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Leader Authenticity: The Development and Test of an Operational Measure

A E R A Presentation

New York, March 1982

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ABSTRACT

Leader Authenticity: The Development and Test of an Operational Measure

A definition of leader authenticity was developed focusing on the leader's salience of self over role, non-manipulation of subordinates, and accepting of personal and organizational responsibility. A scale was constructed, administered in a pilot study, analyzed and refined. Data were then collected from 42 elementary schools on that instrument and on 3 other measures as part of a validating procedure. The Leader Authenticity Scale was highly reliable and yielded predicted correlations between leader authenticity and the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionaire subtests for thrust and esprit and the Status Concern Scale.

Leader Authenticity: The Development and Test of an Operational Measure

Authenticity, more precisely leader authenticity, is a slippery concept lending itself easily to neither definition nor measurement. Brumbaugh has reviewed a number of unsuccessful attempts to define the concept and validate a measure of the term.[1] The intent of this study was to present a constitutive definition of leader authenticity, to develop a reliable, operational measure consistent with the definition, and then to check the measure's validity by specifying and testing hypotheses with concepts theoretically related to leader authenticity.

RELATED RESEARCH

Halpin engaged in post hoc speculation about the concept of authenticity subsequent to the completion of the Organizational Climate Descriptive Questionnaire (OCDQ) study.[2] He indicated that the concept of authenticity provided insights and explanations regarding the open-closed school climate dichotomy. Indeed, he contended that the chief consequence of the study was the identification of the significance of authenticity in organizational behavior.[3]

In this vein, Halpin observed that in open schools the principal and teachers seemed purposeful in their behavior, but that their counterparts in the closed schools did not act "real"; they seemed to be playing a part in a less than real life drama.[4] The bureaucratic roles of the teachers and principals of the open schools appeared to be subordinate to what the people filling those roles actually were.

In the closed schools, on the other hand, teachers and principals had their primary source of identification in their role. This salience of role tended to have the participants of the closed schools regard their function ritualistically and keep one another at arm's length, thereby precluding authentic interpersonal relationships.[5] Halpin suggested that two OCDQ subtests served as authenticity indices. In discriminating between authentic and inauthentic principal behavior, Halpin contended that the principal who scored high on thrust was the more authentic individual. He further maintained that the OCDQ subtest for esprit provided an index to group behavior authenticity.[6] Even though Halpin presented arguments that thrust and esprit were indirect indices of authenticity, none of his subtests were direct measures.

In the only attempt thus far to construct such a direct operational measure, Seeman based his Ambivalence Toward Leadership Ideology (Inauthenticity) Scale on the leader's making unrealistic judgements because of that leader's preoccupation with the stereotypic role requirements of the occupied position. Seeman suggested that subjects (superintendents of schools) who scored low on the ambivalence scale actually experienced difficulty on the scale's items, and the denial of choice difficulty was equated to "inauthentic" leader behavior by Seeman.[7]

The construct validity of Seeman's inauthenticity (ambivalence) scale was tested in relation to Rokeach's Dogmatism Scale by Brumbaugh. Brumbaugh hypothesized that highly ambivalent leaders (those who did not deny choice difficulty on ambiguous questions) would be more open-minded than those less ambivalent leaders. The hypothesis rationale

was built around Halpin's suggestion that Seeman's instrument, if valid an an inauthenticity measure, should distinguish between principals of open and closed climate schools. Brumbaugh stressed that Halpin saw open and closed mindedness in individuals as the conceptual equivalent of open and closed organizational climates. The data served to contradict the hypothesis. Indeed, it was shown that ambivalence toward leadership ideology appeared to be positively related to closed mindedness.[8]

Brumbaugh speculated that one of the possible causes for the lack of support for the hypothesis was that while Seeman's primary research concern was the sociological aspects of inauthenticity, his measure was constructed as a psychological index of inauthenticty.[9] The decision was made in the present study to identify basic aspects of authenticity, and then to measure them in terms of the behavior of principals as perceived by teachers in the school situation, rather than to measure those aspects through an index of self-perception completed by principals.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Social scientific research does not abound with studies relating to authenticity. Nevertheless, several related studies of social behavior led to a definition of leader authenticity composed of three aspects: salience of self over role, manipulation, and accountability.[10]

Salience of self over role refers to a leader's tendency to behave in a genuine manner relatively unconstrained by traditional role requirements. Such a person is viewed as being real or authentic. The inauthentic leader, on the other hand, exhibits a salience of role over self. This individual functions within the narrow constraints of a job description, never expanding effort beyond that routinized level. In short, the personality of this leader is engulfed by the demands of the

office.

This aspect of leader authenticity was at the heart of Seeman's inauthenticity concept; inauthenticity reflected the overreaction to the occupancy of a given status and making unrealistic decisions due to the perceived demands of that role.[11] Likewise, the principal in Halpin's closed climate school ritualized the practices of the school and exhibited personal behavior that showed itself to be two-dimensional and resistant to change.[12] Halpin explained this behavior through the concept of the marginal person. In characterizing educational administration as a marginal profession, Halpin indicated that some principals behaved as other marginal people did; that is, they eagerly over-conformed to what they perceived to be societal expectations.[13] Goffman explained that over-conformation to role expectations in terms of stigmatized individuals being drawn into unwanted but expected behaviors. This effect occurred as a result of a similar other's stereotypic behavior being accepted (and expected) by society.[14] Carling dealt with social stereotyping of acceptable role behavior simply in terms of expectancy.[15] When one's behavior reflected the inability to overcome role stereotyping, whether that stereotyping was perpetuated only in the role incumbent's mind or through societal sanctions, that behavior was indicative of inauthenticity.

On the other hand, when the role incumbent was able to break through the barriers of role stereotyping and behave in congruence with the needs of a situation, then that person's behavior manifested authenticity. This process was described in Horney's search for the authentic self in therapeutic sessions[16] and by Jourard in describing an authentic person-to-person relationship.[17] Argyris also emphasized

the necessity of his reality-centered leader's stepping out of the normal role requirements according to the dictates of the situation encountered.[18]

Non-manipulation of subordinates reflects the perception of subordinates that their leader avoids strategies designed to exploit or use them as objects would be used. The authentic leader is viewed as one who treats subordinates with respect and demonstrates a consistency of expressions and actions, while the inauthentic leader is perceived as dealing with subordinates as if they were things.

This second aspect of leader authenticity was founded in Tiryakian's discrimination between the ontological and ontic levels of existence. When used with regard to humans, the ontic orientation referred to the objectification of the self and others, while the ontological orientation respected the essence and realness of the self and others. To Tiryakian, authentic behavior was the avoidance of manipulating others as if they were objects. Inauthentic behavior was seen as the objectification of the self and others in social relations.[19] Jones, Bell and Aronson distinguised between manipulation and cooperation. A manipulator of people is successful only when the significant others in the social interaction confuse actions of manipulation (typified by motives of self-aggrandizement and exploitation) as being complimentary and cooperative actions.[20]

Accountability is the aspect of leader authenticity that describes the leader's accepting responsibility and admitting mistakes. The authentic leader accepts responsibility for his or her own actions and the actions of those in the organization, and admits to mistakes when they are made. In contrast, the inauthentic leader is seen by subordinates as willing to "scapegoat" others and "pass the buck." This

person is unwilling to accept responsibility and admit to mistakes; rather, others and circumstances are blamed for errors and failures.

Halpin implied an accountability aspect to authentic leader behavior when he spoke of the principal, who was high in thrust, as setting an example for teachers.[21] Further, he described Schachtel's formulation of focal attention of reality as requiring the elimination of need dominated behavior.[22] In this specialized case, the principal reduced need dominated behavior of teachers by accepting general organizational responsibility and allowed them to focalize attention on teaching. Thus, teachers viewed the principal as being highly accountable.

Leader authenticity is therefore defined as the extent to which subordinates perceive their leader to be maximizing the acceptance of organizational and personal responsibility for actions, outcomes, and mistakes; to be non-manipulating of subordinates; and to demonstrate a salience of self over role. Leader inauthenticity is defined as the extent to which subordinates perceive their leader to be "passing the buck" and blaming others and circumstances for errors and outcomes; to be manipulating subordinates; and to be demonstrating a salience of role over self.

DEVELOPMENT OF AN OPERATIONAL MEASURE

Having defined the concept of leader authenticity, it then became necessary to develop and test a measure of that concept. Since a validated instrument had not yet been developed to measure leader authenticity, the need arose to develop original questionnaire items; therefore a pilot study was planned to develop an operational measure of leader authenticity.

Pilot Study

Subjects. Teachers enrolled in six classes in the Graduate School of Education of Rutgers University agreed to serve as participants in the study. The subjects completed 208 usable questionnaires.

Procedure. Construction of the preliminary Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS) was accomplished through the generation of sets of items derived from each of the major aspects of leader authenticity that were identified in the review of the literature. After a number of revisions and informal consultations with professors of educational administration in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education, a set of 75 items was agreed upon as representing the major aspects of leader authenticity. The items were placed in questionnaire format using a six-point modified Likert Scale ranging from agree strongly to disagree strongly.

Following the administration of the preliminary LAS to the sample of 208 teachers, analysis was begun. A factor analysis, using an orthogonal rotation with varimax solution, provided the best solution. At this exploratory stage of the study, two factors were identified, both with eigenvalues greater than two and explaining 75.9% of the variance. Items were eliminated from further consideration if they did not have factor loadings greater than .45 on either of the two factors.

To insure content validity, the remaining forty-four items were subjected to the scrutiny and evaluation of four experts: a curriculum professor, a statistics professor, and two administration and supervision professors in the Rutgers Graduate School of Education. Three considerations guided the judgements of those critics: (a) the clarity of the statements, (b) the extent to which the items differentiated

between authentic and inauthentic leaders, and (c) the degree to which the items were representative of the three aspects of leader authenticity. Only items that were judged to meet all three criteria by all the experts were retained. Thus, twenty-two additional items were eliminated from the LAS. Alpha coefficients for the scales were .94 and .95. Finally the expert review panel suggested the addition of 13 new items to the LAS as a result of the content validity discussions. This resulted in a 35-item LAS, ready for administration in schools.

Further Refinement of the LAS

The pilot study had produced a reasonable instrument to measure subordinate perceptions of aspects of leader authenticity. Before the LAS was used in hypotheses testing, however, another factor analysis was performed to determine factor structure of a more extensive sample.

Subjects. Data were collected from teachers in 42 New Jersey elementary schools during regularly scheduled faculty meetings. One-half of the faculty in each school was randomly selected to respond to the LAS; and 90% of those selected returned usable questionnaires.

Procedure. Using the data collected in the 42 elementary schools, the revised, 35-item Leader Authenticity Scale (LAS) was subjected to a series of factor analyses. An orthogonal rotation, varimax solution for three factors was performed. Only two factors had values greater than unity, and the application of the Scree Test clearly identified only one bipolar factor, with an eigenvalue of 16.47, accounting for 47.1% of the variance.[23] A factor anlaysis using the principal factor solution for one factor was then performed and 32 of the 35 items of the LAS loaded at .45 or greater. The data for this factor analysis

are presented in Table 1. The revised Leader Authenticity Scale used in the hypothesis testing contained 32 items and was highly reliable (alpha = .96).

Insert Table 1

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Since the reliability and the content validity of the 32-item LAS had been supported, the next task was to test the construct validity of the instrument. Guiding the investigation were Cronbach's construct validity requirements of speculating as to the construct which accounts for measured performance, deriving hypotheses from the theory involving that construct, and testing those hypotheses empirically.[24] Furthermore, limitations of the ex post facto research design for the hypothesis testing had to be minimized. Because of the inherent lack of control of ex post facto research,[25] procedures such as insuring the methodological independence of groups and randomly dividing the group of subjects were established to enhance the research design.

Some Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were developed to test the relationships of leader authenticity with other theoretically relevant variables.[26] Halpin argued that esprit, the faculty satisfaction emerging from task accomplishment and personal need gratification, was an index of the authenticity of the principal-teacher relationship; and that thrust, the teachers' perception of the principal's efforts to motivate through personal example, was an indication of the principal's authenticity.[27]

Thus, it was hypothesized that:

H.1 Esprit is positively correlated with leader authenticity.

H.2 Thrust is positively correlated with leader authenticity.

A personality variable was also predicted to be related to leader authenticity. Status concern refers to the placing of value on symbols of status and on the attainment of higher status.[28] This variable appears to describe the antithesis of the leader who is able to demonstrate a salience of self over role and is unconcerned with the trappings of role; thus, the following hypothesis was developed:

H.3 Status concern is negatively correlated with leader authenticity.

Sample

The hypotheses of this study were tested using data collected from teachers and principals in the same 42 New Jersey elementary schools used to develop the revised LAS. In selecting the schools, an attempt was made to include various community types in the sample. The schools' faculties ranged in size from 6 to 32 teachers. The schools studied served any grade combination between kindergarten through eighth grade.

Procedure

Data were collected from teachers in regularly scheduled faculty meetings. Usable research instruments were gathered from 591 teachers and 42 principals. Information obtained from individuals was aggregated to reflect the properties of the 42 schools on the variables studied. The school organization, not the individual respondent, was the unit of analysis for the hypothesis testing. In order to maintain

methodological independence between the variables, each school faculty was randomly divided into two groups. One group of 291 teachers responded to the Leader Authenticity Scale, while the other group of 300 teachers completed the Esprit and Thrust subtests of the OCDQ. The principals responded to the Status Concern Scale.

Instruments

The Esprit subtest consists of ten items and the Thrust subtest consists of nine items. The response to the OCDQ items ranges from rarely occurs to frequently occurs on a four-point scale. Corrected split-half reliability coefficients of .75 for esprit and .84 for thrust are reported by Halpin and Croft.[29] In this study, alpha coefficients for esprit and thrust were .76 and .89 respectively. Andrews presents data to support the construct validity of these subtests of the OCDQ.[30]

The Status Concern Scale consists of 10 Likert-type items with the response format ranging on a six-point agreement/disagreement continuum. Kaufman reports a corrected split-half reliability of .78. The alpha coefficient for the Status Concern Scale was .89 in the present investigation. Validity findings are described in terms of the differences between the item means of high and low scorers being significant at the .01 level for each item. Further, the Status Concern Scale correlates with the F (Fascism) Scale (r=.73) and with the Anti-Semitism Scale (r=.66).[31]

Results

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed and used to test each hypothesis. Hypotheses were accepted if the

relationship was statistically significant at the .05 level. Leader authenticity, as predicted, was positively correlated with both esprit (r=.52, $p<.01$) and thrust (r=.65, $p<.01$). Also as hypothesized, leader authenticity was negatively correlated with status concern (r= -.30, $p<.05$). The results are summarized in Table 2.

Insert Table 2

CONCLUSIONS

The purposes of the present study were to constitutively and operationally define leader authenticity, and to test that operational measure by specifying and examining relationships with theoretically related concepts. A definition of leader authenticity has been presented and a highly reliable measure of that concept has been developed. There is strong support for the relationship between leader authenticity and thrust and esprit. This is not surprising in that thrust describes teachers' perceptions of principals' goal-directed behavior and esprit describes teachers' perceptions of their own ability to enjoy social needs fulfillment and task accomplishment; these perceptions are likely to coincide with teachers' perceptions of principals who accept organizational responsibility and alleviate need-dominated teacher behavior, who treat subordinates as people not as objects, and who exhibit a sense of self beyond role. There is also support for the relationship between status concern and leader authenticity. The strength of this relationship may have been diminished because as status

concern was measured as a psychological construct of principals' self-perceptions; leader authenticity was a sociological variable. Nevertheless, the empirical results supported all of the theoretical predictions.

The study does have some limitations. The sample was limited to faculties of 42 New Jersey elementary schools and the research focused only on teacher-principal perceptions. The LAS is not a psychological construct; it merely measures the descriptions of principal behavior in terms of three aspects that have been defined in the literature to represent authentic behavior. Nonetheless, given the importance of authenticity in the study of organizational life, the development of a reliable and valid measure (the LAS) of teachers' perceptions of leader authenticity provides researchers with an important tool for future study.

NOTES

1. For a complete discussion of previous attempts to define and measure authenticity see R. Brumbaugh, "Authenticity and Theories of Administrative Behavior," Administrative Science Quarterly 16 (March, 1971): 108-112.
2. A. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration (New York: Macmillan, 1966).
3. Ibid., p. 207.
4. Ibid., pp. 204-205.
5. Ibid., p. 206.
6. Ibid., pp. 206-207.
7. M. Seeman, Sociological Status and Leadership (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1960), p. 103.
8. Brumbaugh, "Authenticity and Theories of Administrative Behavior."
9. Ibid.
10. Four other possible aspects of leader authenticity were also explored, but were discarded.
11. Seeman, Sociological Status and Leadership.
12. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration, p. 206.
13. Ibid., p. 212.
14. E. Goffman, Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963).
15. F. Carling, And Yet We Are Human (London: Chatto and Windus, 1962).
16. K. Horney, Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1950).

17. S. Jourard, "Healthy Personality and Self-Disclosure," Mental Hygiene 43 (1959): 499-507.

18. C. Argyris, Personality and Organization (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

19. E. Tiryakian, "The Existential Self and the Person," in The Self in Social Interaction, eds. C. Gordon, K. Gergen (New York: Wiley, 1968), pp. 75-86.

20. E. Jones, L. Bell and E. Aronson, "The Reciprocation of Attraction from Similar and Dissimilar Others," in Experimental Social Psychology, ed. C. McClintock (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1972). Other studies relating to the manipulation/cooperation dichotomy are: E. Jones, R. Jones and K. Gergen, "Some Conditions Affecting the Evaluation of a Conformist," Journal of Personality 31 (1963): 270-288; C. Lowe and J. Goldstein, "Reciprocal Liking and Attribution of Ability: Mediating Effects of Perceived Intent and Personal Involvement," Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 16 (1970): 291-298; and C. Kleinke, R. Staneski and P. Weaver, "Evaluation of a Person Who Uses Another Person's Name In Ingratiating and Noningratiating Situations," Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 8 (1972): 457-466.

21. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration, p. 151.

22. Ibid., p. 219.

23. R. Cattell, "The Scree Test for the Number of Factors," Multivariate Behavioral Research 1 (1966) 245-276

24. L. Cronbach, Essentials of Psychological Testing 3rd ed. (New York; Harper & Row, 1970).

25. F. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973).

26. A fourth hypothesis was originally proposed between leader authenticity and rigidity; see J. Rehfisch, "Some Scale and Test Correlates of a Personalaty Rigidity Scale," Journal of Consulting Psychology 22 (1958): 372-374. However, because the reliability of the Rigidity Scale was so low (alpha =.52) in the present study, an adequate test of the hypothesis was not possible.

27. Halpin, Theory and Research in Administration, p. 205.

28. W. Kaufman, "Status, Authoritarianism, and Anti-Semitism," American Journal of Sociology 62 (1957): 379-382.

29. A. Halpin and D. Croft, The Organizational Climate of Schools (Chicago: Midwestern Administration Center, University of Chicago, 1963).

30. J. Andrews, "School Organizational Climate: Some Validity Studies," Canadian Education and Research Digest 5 (1965): 317-334.

31. Kaufman, "Status, Authoritarianism, and Anti-Semitism."

32. Brumbaugh, "Authenticity and Theories of Administrative Behavior."

TABLE 1

RESULTS OF THE FACTOR ANALYSIS OF THE 35 REVISED LEADER AUTHENTICITY SCALE ITEMS (1-FACTOR SOLUTION)

ITEM	FACTOR
Salience of Self or Role:	
1. The principal is obsessed with rules	.66
2. When dealing with a teacher, the principal behaves like know-it-all.	.75
3. The principal is not afraid to admit when he (or she) doesn't know something.	-.55
4. After meeting together in situations like evaluation conferences, I feel that I know the principal better as a person.	-.60
5.[a] The principal never talks to teachers about personal concerns.	.33
6. The principal encourages "give-and-take" discussion with individual teachers.	-.69
7. The principal appears to have "rehearsed" answers for teachers during conferences.	.70
8. The principal is a person first, and an administrator second.	-.69
9.[a] The principal runs the school "by the book".	.39
Accountability:	
10. The principal is willing to admit to mistakes when they are made.	-.74
11. The principal accepts responsibility for the principal's own actions and for the progress of the school.	-.71

TABLE 1 (continued)

ITEM	FACTOR
12. The principal is very defensive about any criticism.	.74
13. The principal finds it difficult to accept failure.	.71
14.[a] The "buck" stops in the principal's office	-.28
15. It's an unwritten rule around here that you don't criticize the principal.	.69
16. If the principal makes a mistake, a reason is made to cover-up for the error.	.82
17. If something goes wrong in the school, the principal is sure to blame someone else on the staff.	.85
18. The principal is easily swayed by parent pressure.	.61
19. The principal likes to take credit for teachers' accomplishments, but doesn't want to be blamed for any failures.	.80
20. The principal accepts and learns from mistakes.	-.76
21. Whenever authority is delegated to a staff member, the principal stands behind that person.	-.74
22. The principal would not hesitate to put a board member or parent in place if necessary.	-.53
Manipulation:	
23. The principal usually has teachers do things to make the principal look good.	.67

TABLE 1 (continued)

ITEM	FACTOR
24. The principal doesn't have much to do with teachers unless a teacher can help the principal in some way.	.71
25. The principal is an opportunist in dealing with teachers.	.62
26. The principal manipulates the teachers.	.73
27. Discussing serious issues, the principal likes to "play games."	.63
28. Teachers are afraid if they confide in the principal that the information will be used against them.	.64
29. The principal seems to talk at you and not with you.	.81
30. The principal is honest in face-to-face interactions.	-.74
31. Many times the principal will say one thing to teachers and something quite different to students or parents.	.69
32. It's not uncommon to see the principal pit one teacher against another.	.71
Overall Items:	
33. The principal is authentic.	-.57
34. The principal's beliefs and actions are consistent.	-.73
35. The principal is a phony.	.64
Eigenvalue	15.98
Variance Explained	45.6%

Principal factor with 3 iterations solution for 1 factor, N = 289. Items are numbered for ease of reference only; they were not administered in that order.

[a] Items loading at less than .45 and not included for hypothesis testing use.

TABLE 2

PRODUCT - MOMENT CORRELATIONS BETWEEN THE MEASURE OF LEADER AUTHENTICITY AND MEASURES OF ESPRIT, THRUST, AND STATUS CONCERN (N=42)

	LEADER AUTHENTICITY
Esprit	.52**
Thrust	.65**
Status Concern	-.30*

* $P < .05$ ** $P < .01$